

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 12-2-12 AM NOTES  
"THE REAL LORD'S PRAYER" (PART 2)  
JOHN 17:3  
#67 in Series, "Verse-by-Verse Through John"

"He that reads the words spoken by one Person of the blessed Trinity to another Person, by the Son to the Father, must surely be prepared to find much that he cannot fully understand, much that he has no line to fathom. There are sentences, words, and expressions, in the twenty-six verses of this chapter, which no one probably has ever unfolded completely. We have not minds to do it, or to understand the matters it contains, if we could. But there are great truths in the chapter which stand out clearly and plainly on its face, and to these truths we shall do well to direct our best attention."

—J. C. Ryle

**Ecclesiastes 3:11b (ESV)** "He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity into man's heart..."

I. The Meaning of Eternal Life

"[Zoe is used in the New Testament to refer to] life as a principle, life in the absolute sense, life as God has it, that which the Father has in Himself, and which He gave to the incarnate Son to have in Himself (**John 5:26 [NKJV]** "For as the Father has life [zoe] in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life [zoe] in Himself."), and which the Son manifested in the world (1 John 1:2). From this life man has become alienated in consequence of the fall (Ephesians 4:18), and of this life men become partakers through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ..."

—W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, William White Jr.

**John 1:3 (NASB)** "All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being."

**2 Thessalonians 1:9 (ESV)** "They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might."

**John 3:36 (NKJV)** "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

II. The Source of Eternal Life

**1 John 1:1-2 (NKJV)** "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life-- <sup>2</sup> the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us."

**1 John 5:11 (NKJV)** "And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son."

**1 John 5:20 (NKJV)** "And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life."

**Colossians 3:4 (NKJV)** "When Christ *who is* our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."

1. We Have a New Past

**Romans 6:6 (NKJV)** "knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin."

**Galatians 2:20a (NKJV)** "I have been crucified with Christ..."

**1 Corinthians 15:22 (NKJV)** “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.”

2. We Have a New Present

**2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV)** “Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

**2 Peter 1:4b (NKJV)** “...you may be partakers of the divine nature...”

3. We Have a New Future

**Ephesians 2:5-6 (KJV)** “Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved ;) <sup>6</sup> and hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus.”

**1 Thessalonians 4:17 (NKJV)** “Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”

III. The Recipients of Eternal Life

**Matthew 1:24-25 (HCSB)** “When Joseph got up from sleeping, he did as the Lord’s angel had commanded him. He married her <sup>25</sup> but did not know her intimately until she gave birth to a son. And he named Him Jesus.”

1. Those who know God have a great energy for God

**Daniel 11:32b (NKJV)** “...but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out *great exploits*.”

“Attempt great things for God; expect great things from God.”

—William Cary

2. Those who know God have great thoughts of God

3. Those who know God show great boldness for God

4. Those who know God have great contentment in God

**Romans 5:1 (NKJV)** “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

**Philippians 3:10 (NKJV)** “that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.”

**2 Peter 3:18a (NKJV)** “but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

“O, brother Payne, the long wished for day has come at last, in which I shall see the glory in another manner than I have ever done or was capable of doing in this world.”

—John Owen on his deathbed in 1683

**Philippians 1:23b (NKJV)** “...to depart and be with Christ, *which is* far better.”

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“THE REAL LORD’S PRAYER” (PART 2)  
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#67 in Series, “Verse by Verse through John”

John 17 is one of the most difficult chapters in the Bible. Albert Einstein is credited with saying, “We should explain things as simply as possible, but not more simple than they are.” This is not a simple chapter. It involves communication between members of the Trinity. Dr. J. C. Ryle summarizes why this chapter has much that we cannot explain: “He that reads the words spoken by one Person of the blessed Trinity to another Person, by the Son to the Father, must surely be prepared to find much that he cannot fully understand, much that he has no line to fathom. There are sentences, words, and expressions, in the twenty six verses of this chapter, which no one probably has ever unfolded completely. We have not minds to do it, or to understand the matters it contains, if we could. But there are great truths in the chapter which stand out clearly and plainly on its face, and to these truths we shall do well to direct our best attention.” [J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels, Volume IV*, Page 167].

Last week we looked at the first two verses of John 17 and we saw in verse two, three gifts – two gifts that the Father gives to the Son, and one gift that the Son gives to those that the Father has given Him. The first of the three gifts is the gift the Father gives the Son of authority over all mankind. The second gift that the father gives the Son is a special people. Because the Son has all authority, He gives the third gift to those special people the Father has given to Him – eternal life. Verse three tells us some of what this eternal life is and what its results are. We will combine today’s passage with several other passages in the New Testament to get an understanding of what the Bible calls “eternal life” or in some passages the same Greek words are translated “everlasting life”.

There seems to be knowledge innately within every person that there is some kind of life beyond this physical life we endure here on earth. Indeed, **Ecclesiastes 3:11b (ESV)** tells us, “...he has put eternity into man’s heart...” In almost every culture, among most every people group, there is some kind of a belief in a life after this physical life. The Bible declares very clearly that there is an existence that lasts forever after this life. What kind of existence is it? What determines what this existence is like? Verse three of John 17 gives us important truth about eternity and eternal life.

## I. The Meaning of Eternal Life

Let’s begin by looking at the meaning of the words “eternal life” themselves. The Greek word translated “life” is “zoe”. That has become a fairly common name for girls in our culture. There is another Greek word that is also translated “life”. The second word is “bios”. Here is the difference between these words: “Bios” means physical life. The word “biology” is the study of or the science of physical life processes. In contrast to “bios” is “zoe” (the word for life in our text). “Zoe” is spiritual life, but really, it is much more than that. W. E. Vine in his classic work, *Vine’s Dictionary of New Testament Words* says this about “zoe”: “[Zoe is used in the New Testament] of life as a principle, life in the absolute sense, life as God has it, that which the Father has in Himself, and which He gave to the incarnate Son to have in Himself (**John 5:26 (NKJV)** “For as the Father has life [zoe] in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life [zoe] in Himself), and which the Son manifested in the world (1 John 1:2). From this life man has become alienated in consequence of the fall (Ephesians 4:18), and of this life men become partakers through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ...” [W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, William White Junior, *Vines Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, Page 367]. The word “eternal” literally means always being. Let me stretch your thinking a bit. I want to review something that we touched on in the last message. Think of the whole time dimension as something that was created by God. **John 1:3 (NASB)** “All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.” Young children often ask the question, “Where did God come from” or “How did God come into being”. God has always been and thus had no beginning. The reason that God has no beginning is because He existed before the time dimension was ever created. Before time was created, God the Father, God the

Son, and God the Holy Spirit existed in perfect love and oneness in all of their glory. One old preacher was asked, "Where was God before He created the world?" He answered, "He was in His glory!" That is not a bad answer! God created time and God is not the prisoner of His creation. He is not bound by time. That gives us brain cramps because all we've ever known is in the time dimension. Everything to us is past, present, or future. God is not bound by time. Everything is "now" with God. One of His holiest names is Jehovah which literally means "I Am". With that background, let's look at eternal life as it is used in verse three of our text. If you ask most people what eternal life means, the answer would be, "It means to live forever". If you asked a follow up question of "when does eternal life begin", the most common answer would be, "when you die". Both of those answers are wrong. Eternal life is more than extended life. It is not so much a quantity of time but a quality of experience. Those who spend eternity in hell will live in conscious existence forever and yet they surely don't have this eternal life that Jesus spoke of. **2 Thessalonians 1:9 (ESV)** speaks of the future of the unsaved: "They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might". The lost will have conscious existence forever, but they certainly do not have eternal life. Don't think of eternal life just in terms of length (though it continues even when time ceases to be). Also, don't think of eternal life in terms of starting when our temporal life here on earth is ended with physical death. When the New Testament speaks of receiving eternal life, it is always received at salvation, not at physical death. Those who are in Christ have eternal life as a present possession. **John 3:36 (NKJV)** "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." Eternal life is a gift from the Son to those given to the Son by the Father.

## II. The Source of Eternal Life

The source of eternal life is Christ Himself. His life is eternal life. **1 John 1:1-2 (NKJV)** "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life-- <sup>2</sup> the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us". **1 John 5:11 (NKJV)** "And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, [John, where is this eternal life?] and this life is in His Son." **1 John 5:20 (NKJV)** "And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." The essence of eternal life is to be united to Jesus Christ who is eternal life. Follow the line of reasoning I am going to give you. One of the most common ways to describe individual Christians in the epistles of the New Testament is that Christians are "in Christ". The phrase "in Christ", "in Him", or the equivalent is used scores of times in the New Testament epistles. The Bible clearly teaches that at salvation, the Holy Spirit baptizes us into Christ – we are united to Christ and thus we are "in Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:13). We have become partakers of His very life. **Colossians 3:4 (NKJV)** "When Christ *who is* our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory." This doctrine of our union with Christ is one of the most neglected doctrines in the Scripture. When we are brought into union with Christ through the Holy Spirit baptizing us into Christ, we become a partaker of His eternal life. What does that mean?

### 1. We Have a New Past

All that we were before we came to Christ is united with Christ in His death. All that we were in Adam is now nailed to the cross with Christ. **Romans 6:6 (NKJV)** "knowing this, that our old man [all we were as a descendent of Adam and a partaker of the results of Adam's sins – slavery to Satan and the power of sin, separation from God, and even more] was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin." We see that same truth in **Galatians 2:20a (NKJV)** "I [the old us in Adam, our old nature that loved sin] have been crucified with Christ..." In our first birth, we were united to the first Adam and thus bore the consequences that Adam bore because of sin coming into the world. When we were born again, we were united to Christ (the second Adam). Our past is no longer in the first Adam who sinned in a garden, but in the one called "the second Adam" – Jesus Christ who agonized in a garden and then was crucified for sin and for sinners on a cross. **1 Corinthians 15:22**

(NKJV) “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.” In Christ, you have a new past.

## 2. We Have a New Present

Because we are united with Christ, our present is changed. **2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV)** “Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ [has been brought into union with Christ], *he is* [right now] a new creation; old things have passed away [crucified with Christ]; behold, all things have become new.” We now have a new nature, a new spiritual DNA, new hatred for sin, new love for the Lord and for holiness and for His Word. We have been transformed down to our very nature which **2 Peter 1:4 (NKJV)** describe like this: “...you may be partakers of the divine nature...” We are right now redeemed and forgiven (Ephesians 1:7), made righteous in Christ (Philippians 3:9), accepted by God (Ephesians 1:6), and sealed with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14) which means that this new person in Christ is secure and no one can steal us away from Him. To have eternal life means that we are united to Christ who is eternal life and we have a new past and a new present.

## 3. We Have a New Future

Because we are in union with Christ, we share in His future. He is now ascended to the Father’s right hand in Heaven and all things are under His feet (Ephesians 1:22) which means that He is victorious over all things. Where are we? We are in Him! **Ephesians 2:5-6 (KJV)** “Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) <sup>6</sup> And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus”. When our time is up down here our future is with Him in eternal bliss and fulfillment in giving glory to Him around the throne with the angels and with saints from every tongue, tribe, people and nation! **1 Thessalonians 4:17 (NKJV)** “Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”

## III. The Recipients of Eternal Life

In verse 3 we see a description of those who have received eternal life. They know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom God the Father has sent. Verse three is not a definition of eternal life; it shows how eternal life reveals itself in those who are in union with Jesus Christ who is eternal life. The key word in understanding those who have received eternal life is “know”. Those who have received eternal life know God. Before we look in depth at what that means, let me tell you some things that it does not mean. Knowing God does not here mean just knowing facts about God. Theology is the study of God. There are many theologians who know facts about God, but they do not know God! Many find the study of God intriguing and interesting. In the 1600’s it was said that theology was every man’s hobby. Kathy and I have had the privilege of going to Israel 2 times (19 years apart). If you’ve ever been on a tour of Israel, one of the things that will amaze you is the knowledge of the guides. The guides are all licensed by the government and must do a great deal of study and keep up with archeological findings. The first time we were in Israel in 1993, we had a really good guide named Zvi. He was amazing in his knowledge of not only the Old Testament, but also His knowledge of the New Testament. He would speak of what Jesus said and the circumstances surrounding what He said. He knew so about the life and teaching of Jesus – more than 98% of the professing Christians I know. I was just certain that he must be a Christian. When asked, he unhesitatingly said that he was not a Christian. It is possible to know a lot about God and not know God. You can go through classes and answer questions about God and His word correctly and still not know God. The devil likely knows more about God than any of us, but he does not know God. Only those who have eternal life know God.

If this knowing God is not just knowing facts about God, what does it mean? First, John says that it involves knowing the “only true God”. In a pluralistic, postmodern age where the only accepted absolute truth is that there is no absolute truth, we emphasize that eternal life is a present possession only of those who know the God who has revealed Himself in the Scriptures. It is not just the knowledge of just any God. The only true God is Jehovah, the God revealed in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. Now, let’s look at this word “know”. As it is used in our text, the word means a personal, intimate,

experiential knowledge of the only true God. In fact, this word for know is used of the physical act of marriage. **Matthew 1:24-25 (HCSB)** “When Joseph got up from sleeping, he did as the Lord’s angel had commanded him. He married her <sup>25</sup> but did not know her intimately until she gave birth to a son. And he named Him Jesus.”

In his classic book, *Knowing God*, (Pages 23-27) J. I Packer gives several characteristics of one who knows God as it is referring to in our text.

1. Those who know God have great energy for God

**Daniel 11:32b (NKJV)** “...but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out *great exploits*.” A true knowledge of God results in a life characterized by the slogan of the father of modern missions, William Cary: “Attempt great things for God; expect great things from God”.

2. Those who know God have great thoughts of God

These great thoughts of God work their way out in our lives through a lifestyle of worship.

3. Those who know God show great boldness for God

How can this experiential knowledge of God which would include experiencing His power in making us a new creation not result in a bold stance for Him and His truth even when that may not be popular?

4. Those who know God have great contentment in God

To know Him is to know His peace. **Romans 5:1 (NKJV)** “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”.

This knowledge of God matures, develops and deepens. Even toward the end of His life, the Apostle Paul prayed using the same word for “know” as is used in our text. **Philippians 3:10 (NKJV)** “that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death”. Paul had come to know Christ, but he wanted to know Him more deeply and intimately. We never arrive in this primary quality of those who have eternal life. We are continually longing to know Him more intimately and as **2 Peter 3:18a (NKJV)** “[to] grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” I believe that even in Heaven this deepening in our intimacy and knowledge will continue. I believe that this glorious expectation of growing deeper in our intimacy with Him ought to be one of the reasons that we long for Heaven. One of the most prolific writers among the Puritans was John Owen (1616-1683) who is called by some the greatest Pastor in England in his day. After a life with many trials and heartaches, Owen lay dying in 1683. A co-worker William Payne, came to see him and records what Owen said to him. “O, brother Payne, the long wished for day has come at last, in which I shall see the glory in another manner than I have ever done or was capable of doing in this world.” [Quoted in John Piper, *God Is the Gospel*, Page 126]. Owen had discovered what Paul meant when he said in **Philippians 1:23b (NKJV)** “...to depart and be with Christ, *which is far better*.” The enticement of Heaven should not be the beauty of the surroundings but that we will know Him who gave us eternal life in a deeper and more intimate way than is even possible here on planet earth.